

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending in the application.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by *Macher et al.* (US 6,286,983). The examiner has cited this reference on the form PTO-892 as the only reference while the text of the office action refers to *Rupp* (US 6,231,201); the *Rupp* reference does not match the remarks provided by the examiner while the *Macher* reference does. Therefore, the examiner obviously has applied the *Macher* reference and not *Rupp*.

The present invention relates to an interior light assembly for motor vehicles that comprises a frame; at least one lens arranged in the frame; at least one illumination element arranged behind the at least one lens in an interior of the interior light assembly; and at least one electroluminescent film arranged behind the at least one lens in the interior of the interior light assembly.

The invention thus claims at least one **illumination element** arranged behind the at least one lens in the interior of the interior light assembly **and** at least one **electroluminescent film** arranged behind the at least one lens in the interior of the interior light assembly.

As set forth in the specification in paragraph 0007, the interior light assembly according to the invention comprises an **electroluminescent film in addition to the illumination element**. This has the advantage that the interior light assembly can thus be switched to use only the electroluminescent film for a low intensity illumination of the interior; the switched-on interior light assembly does not disturb the driver. When more light is needed, for example, for reading a road map, the illumination element can be switched on additionally. The electroluminescent film and the illumination element can also be switched on and off simultaneously; the electroluminescent film then generates additional light so that the illumination element can radiate with less intensity.

The examiner states that the cited prior art discloses at least one illumination element (4) arranged behind the lens and at least one electroluminescent film (5) arranged

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behind the lens.

It is respectfully submitted that *Macher et al.* discloses one and only one lighting element 4, and this lighting element 4 "consists of an at least double-layered electroluminescent film 5 and is connected over the entire surface via an intermediate layer 6 to a carrier film 7" (col. 4, lines 34-38). See also col. 5, lines 4 and 5. The lighting element 4 refers to the configuration consisting of the film 5, the layer 6 and the carrier film 7. The electroluminescent film 5 is **part of the lighting element 4** and is the only part that illuminates. Therefore, the electroluminescent film 5 is the only element that supplies light. There is no illumination element and an electroluminescent film **in addition to the illumination element**.

Moreover, the examiner refers to the element 34 as the frame of the light assembly. The element 34 is the vehicle frame and not the frame of the light assembly (col. 5, lines 45-46). The only embodiment that has a frame is the configuration of Fig. 14 showing frame 101. It is also clearly shown in this embodiment that the frame and the interior of the lighting device 1 has only **one lighting element 4 consisting of the electroluminescent film 5**; no additional lighting elements are present.

In regard to claims 5 and 6, the examiner states that a first lens is correlated with the at least one illumination element and a second lens with the electroluminescent film. Since the illumination element and the electroluminescent film are one and the same structure, it is not possible that they have first and second lenses separately correlated therewith. In regard to claim 6, the examiner refers to col. 4, lines 51-54, where it is stated: "Such coatings can be provided with crystal particles, or a surface structure can be provided which forms a lens structure covering the entire surface." There is no reference to different sizes of lenses associated with an illumination element and an electroluminescent film. Moreover, the coatings in this context refer to one and the same illumination element: the description relates to the configuration of one lighting element.

In regard to claim 9, it is respectfully submitted that the entire reference cited by the examiner deals only with the lighting element 4 consisting of an electroluminescent film. The only reference in the entire document relating to "incandescent light bulb" can be found in col. 5, lines 27-32, where it is stated that "it is possible when the lighting element 4 is used for a brake light 32, for the latter to be designed in a rectangular form as known from prior art with normal lamp-operated brake lights 32, and can be disposed over a large area on the rear position 29 of the vehicle 30". This reference to "lamp" only refers to the known design of brake lights and does not suggest a combination with such a lamp but the

replacement of such lamp-operated brake lights with the lighting element 4.

The gist of the prior art reference is to replace light bulbs with the lighting element consisting of an electroluminescent film and to improve the light intensity of such lighting elements that use electroluminescent films. The reference therefore cannot provide any teaching or suggestion of combining an electroluminescent film with an additional illumination element.

Claims 1 through 9 are therefore believed to be allowable.

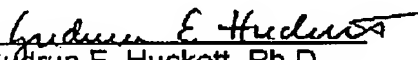
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance and such allowance is respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner have any further objections or suggestions, the undersigned would appreciate a phone call or e-mail from the examiner to discuss appropriate amendments to place the application into condition for allowance.

Authorization is herewith given to charge any fees or any shortages in any fees required during prosecution of this application and not paid by other means to Patent and Trademark Office deposit account 50-1199.

Respectfully submitted on January 2, 2004,


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